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U.S. House of Representatives  
Committee on Ways and Means  
Social Security Subcommittee  
1101 Longworth HOB,  
Washington, D.C. 20515

To Whom it May Concern:

I appreciate the Committee's interest in Disability Insurance and work. I have crossed paths with a number of disability advocacy organizations, working mainly with The Arc of Georgia, but write as a private citizen today. My disabilities do not prevent me from working, but some of my friends have utilized DI. I am also acquainted with people currently seeking such benefits. That always saddens me, not because I see any shame in needing help through no fault of one's own, but because I have described getting on the disability rolls as marrying poverty to break up with destitution.

DI's systemic flaw is a catch-22: benefits related to the disability program often give individuals supports that would allow them to join or rejoin the workforce, but a meaningful paycheck would render them ineligible for assistance without which they would be unemployable. The issue is not just the long-term sustainability of DI; it is the centrality of work to human dignity. Virtually everyone in the pan-disability community wants to be useful. Nothing can replace the pride of an honest day's work for an honest day's pay. Many people with innate and acquired disabilities could be far more productive in a society where supports and incentives were set up differently. Congress has the means to create that society.

Please continue to consider these issues. Consult experts, the disability community, and the public. These are not insoluble problems. The Federal Government needs to reduce its spending. People with disabilities need the dignity and wholesome effects of employment. All parties to the issue want change. With sufficient creativity and thought, we can find a better way to organize disability benefits,

Sincerely yours,

R. Larkin Taylor-Parker